

THE 20TH CENTURY VIOLIST

WAYNE CROUSE, *viola*
and
MARY NORRIS, *piano*

8 p.m. in Hamman Hall
~~Wednesday, September 24, 1980~~
Tuesday, January 13, 1981
Wednesday, April 8, 1981

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music



Wednesday, April 8

Viola and Piano Music by American Composers

PROGRAM

Infanta Marina, Op. 147 (1960)

Vincent Persichetti
(b. 1915)

Suite (1969)

Poco andante
Allegro moderato
Allegretto
Allegro moderato

Halsey Stevens
(b. 1908)

Pastoral (1945)

Elliot Carter
(b. 1908)

Intermission

Sonata No. 2

Andante teneramente
Permutations
Largo
Allegro con moto

Ross Lee Finney
(b. 1906)

* *Kanti For Viola and Piano*

Paul Cooper
(b. 1926)

* *World Premiere*

Tuesday, January 13

PROGRAM

Sonata No. 1 (1946)

Entree
Francaise
Air
Finale

Darius Milhaud
(1892-1974)

Sonata for Viola Solo, Op. 25, No. 1 (1923)

Breit
Sehr frisch und straff
Sehr langsam
Rasendes Zeitmass
Langsam, mit viel Ausdruck

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Intermission

Sonata, Op. 147 (1974)

Moderato
Allegretto
Adagio

Dimitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

Wednesday, September 24

PROGRAM

Sonata (1923) 25'28"
Molto Moderato
Allegro energico, ma non troppo presto
Molto lento

Arnold Bax
(1883-1953)

Lachrymae (1951) 14'36"
~~and "Reflections on a song of Dowland")~~

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

Intermission

Suite (1919) 30'45"
Lento; Allegro
Allegro ironico
Lento
Molto vivo

Ernest Bloch
(1880-1959)

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited. We further request that audible paging devices not be used during performance. Paging arrangements may be made with ushers.

NOTES

SONATA (1921). Arnold Bax

Arnold Bax was one of the composers of the approximate generation of Vaughan Williams, that is, those composers who fulfilled the happy task of redeeming England musically. Like others of our century he wrote much music for instruments and instrumental combinations that were neglected or that were considered odd previously. The present sonata displays, as does much of this composer's music, the rather rich harmonies of many post-romantic composers; at the same time there is a great deal of counterpoint, and often with quite harsh harmonic results. The cyclic aspects of the sonata go further than the mere literal return at its end to a few bars of the introduction. Many of the themes are related, though transformed from one movement to the next. Although the first movement contains some fast passages the classical scheme of the sonata is reversed to slow--fast--slow. The work is dedicated to a violist friend of the composer who is credited with having revised the viola part. That the instrument was properly considered and not treated merely as a violin that can play a little lower is evident from the first page on.

SUITE (1919). Ernest Bloch

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959), like many composers of the first half of the twentieth century, retains numerous conservative features within a modern idiom. Most of his compositions are in traditional forms for traditional ensembles, and his works maintain a tonal basis. The harmonic vocabulary, however, is expanded to make liberal use of dissonance and allow for free juxtaposition of harmonies for coloristic purposes.

The Suite for Viola and Piano is one of a sizeable group of chamber works, but differs from the others in emphasizing the dance rather than sonata structure. The first movement begins with a slow introduction which gradually moves from vague fragmentary ideas to more expansive melodic phrases, eventually accelerating and merging with the main body of the movement, marked Allegro. With the Allegro we enter a more concrete world, characterized by a sharply articulated dance tune in folk style with clearly defined, though constantly changing, metrical groups. The simplicity of

the opening phrase of the dance belies the complexity of expansion and development which ensues as one phrase after another unfolds, some traded off between piano and viola and others woven into a polyphonic fabric through canonic imitation. The frenetic pace dissipates only at the end where a slowing of the tempo offers the leisure for a reminiscence of one of the main phrases of the original tune.

The second movement, Allegro ironico, is a kind of humorous scherzo in which open fourths and fifths, already suggested by the dance tune of the first movement, now emerge into greater prominence. The "ironic" effect is enhanced by short fragments rapidly thrown from one register of the viola to another. Three scherzo sections, all using the same basic material, alternate with two trios. The first trio combines harmonies based on the fourth and fifth with triads. In the second, a harmonic color also based on fourths and fifths serves as background for a melody reminiscent of the first phrase of the dance tune from the preceding Allegro.

The slow movement establishes a special atmosphere through dissonant chords in the piano, either rolled, arpeggiated or repeated, sometimes in the bass, sometimes in the treble. Against this sustained harmonic atmosphere, fragments of the first-movement folk dance appear among seemingly vague musings in the viola. These quotations gradually become more explicit until, at the end of the movement, the piano quotes the very first phrase of the tune in its simple, original form.

The finale is the fastest movement of all and presents a clearly defined dance tune like the first. But this time the fourths and fifths of those earlier movements are carried to the extreme of the pentatonic scale, giving the movement a decidedly Oriental flavor. The dance tune of the first movement appears even here, but significantly altered by the new harmonic context. By the end of the movement, practically every important phrase from the first movement has returned in a new guise. The entire Suite is thus cyclic with all movements tied together by the same material and common harmonic bonds. It is not surprising that a re-examination of the opening slow introduction also yields not-quite-fully-formed fragments of the all-pervasive dance melody.